

CONSTITUTION AND LAWS

OF THE

GOVERNMENT AND GUIDANCE

OF THE

AMERICAN MINERS' ASSOCIATION,

Established January 28, 1861.

"Union is Strength—Knowledge is Power."

Bellefonte, Pa.:

PRINTED AT THE "MINER" OFFICE.

1861.

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Step by step, the longest march
Can be won, can be won ;
Single stones will form an arch,
One by one, one by one,
And by union, what we will
Can be all accomplished still.
Drops of water turn a mill—
Singly none, singly none.

ADDRESS.

The necessity of an Association of Miners, and of those branches of industry immediately connected with mining operations, having for its objects the physical, mental and social elevation of the Miner, has long been felt by the thinking portion of Miners generally.

Union is the great fundamental principle by which every object of importance is to be accomplished. Man is a social being, and if left to himself, in an isolated condition, would be one of the weakest creatures; but, associated with his kind, he works wonders. Men can do jointly what they cannot do singly; and the UNION of minds and hands—the concentration of their power—becomes almost omnipotent. Nor is this all. Men not only accumulate power by union, but gain warmth and earnestness. There is an electric sympathy kindled up amongst them, and the attractive forces inherent in human nature are called into action, and a stream of generous emotion of a friendly regard for each other binds together and animates the whole.

If men would spread one set of opinions or crush another—they make a society. Would they improve the sanitary condition of our towns, light our streets with gas, or supply our dwellings with water—they form societies. From the organization of our armies, our railroads and banking companies, down through every minute ramification of society to trades' associations and sick societies, men have learned the power and efficiency of co-operation, and are, therefore, determined to stand by each other.

How long, then, will Miners remain isolated, antagonistic to each other? Does it not behoove us, as Miners, to use every means to elevate our position in society, by a reformation in character, by obliterating all personal animosities and frivolous nationalities, abandoning our pernicious habits and degrading pursuits, and striving for the attainment of pure

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and high principles and generous motives, which will fit us to bear a manly, useful and honorable part in the world. Our unity is essential to the attainment of our own rights and the amelioration of our present condition; and our voices must be heard in the legislative halls of our land. There it is where our complaints must be made and our rights defined. The insatiable maw of Capital would devour every vestige of Labor's rights; but we must demand legislative protection; and, to accomplish this, we must ORGANIZE. Our remedy, our safety, our protection, our dearest interests, and the social well-being of our families, present and future, depend upon our UNITY, our duty, and our regard for each other.

In laying before you, therefore, the objects of this Association, we desire it to be understood that our objects are not merely *pecuniary*, but to mutually instruct and improve each other in knowledge, which is power; to study the laws of life; the relations of labor to capital; polities, municipal affairs, literature, science, or any other subject relating to the general welfare of our class. Has not experience and observation taught us what one of the profoundest thinkers of the present day has said, that "all human interests, and combined human endeavors, and social growth in this world have, at certain stages of their developments, required organization; and Labor, the *grandest* of human interests, requires it now. There must be an organization of labor; to begin with it straightway, to proceed with it, and succeed in it more and more."

One of America's immortals said, "To me there is no East, no West, no North, no South;" and I would say, let there be no English, no Irish, no Germans, Scotch or Welsh. This is our country, and—

"All men are brethren—how the watch-words run!
And when men act as such is justice won."

Come, then, and rally round the standard of union—the Union of States and the UNITY of MIners, and with honesty of purpose, zeal and watchfulness—the pledge of success—unite for the emancipation of our labor, and the regeneration and elevation, physically, mentally and morally, of our species.

Yours, on behalf of the Miners,

D. W.

PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION
OF THE
American Miners' Association.

WHEREAS, It is the experience of the laboring classes, and especially that of the working miners, that, in the unequal conflict of labor with capital, the laborer, unless he combine with his fellows for mutual protection, is invariably defeated and made the mere tool of designing capitalists; and,

WHEREAS, The working miners are, in the prosecution of their labors, subjected to manifold dangers from explosions and insecure roofs; also from fire damps and other noxious gasses, the result of imperfect ventilation, as well as to accidents arising from other causes consequent upon the parsimony of employers, whose objects it would seem to be the increase of the volume of their capital, without reference to the fearful loss of life, limb and health, which is the cost of such increase; therefore, be it,

Resolved, That we—the working miners of the United States of America—associate for the the purpose of devising and carrying into operation the best means of securing to ourselves protection against the evils before spoken of, and of all others to which we may hereafter be liable, and also for the purpose of mutual improvement, physically, socially and intellectually, and the taking of all necessary steps for the advancement of the best interests of the Association thus formed; and, with this object in view, we adopt the following

CONSTITUTION.

This Association shall be formed of members who shall be practical miners, organized into Lodges, and these Lodges into Districts, which Lodges and Districts shall be under the

supervision of a General Board of Directors or Trustees, who shall, besides exercising this supervision, represent this Association in its corporate capacity.

The General Board shall consist of one President, one Vice-President, one Financial Secretary, one Corresponding Secretary, one Treasurer, and one Delegate, to be elected from each Lodge in the Association, who shall meet once a year and no more, unless a majority of the Lodges in this Association shall determine upon a *Special Called Meeting* of the General Board, by the majority vote of all the respective members of all these respective Lodges; in which case the result of said vote shall be sent to the editor of the *Weekly Miner*—from each Lodge so voting—by the Corresponding Secretary of each Lodge, for publication in that paper, which publication shall be kept standing until it has been determined whether a majority of the Lodges have voted in favor of such called meeting; upon which it is hereby made the duty of the President of the Association to forthwith publish his call for the same in the *Weekly Miner*, stating the time, place and objects of the meeting, and giving sufficient notice thereof to enable all the various Lodges to meet and elect their delegates to said General Board.

The officers of the General Board, to-wit: the President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected by the delegates to the General Board, and each delegate shall have power to give one vote for each and every twenty members composing the Lodges which they represent; provided, that the delegates representing Lodges composed of less than twenty members may appear at the General Board meetings,

and take part in the debates thereof; but they shall bear their own expenses, and no delegate shall be allowed to vote unless he represents at least twenty members. All delegates representing less than that number, and bearing their own expenses, shall be exempted from all liability for any of the expenses of the other delegates to said Board.

Any member of the Association, who is in good standing with his Lodge, shall be eligible to election for any office in the Association.

The duties of the Executive officers of the Association are,

First—That of the President: To preside over all meetings of the Board, and appoint all necessary committees, subject to the approval of the delegates in session; issue calls for such meetings, receive applications for admission of new Lodges into the Association, when the Board is not in session, and admit such new Lodges, if they are organized in a manner harmonious to the Constitution and laws of the Association.

Second—That of the Vice-President: To perform all the various functions of the President in the absence of that officer.

Third—That of the Financial Secretary: To receive all moneys and drafts paid to the General Board, and enter a clear and satisfactory account of the same, as well as of all other financial affairs of the Board, in a book to be provided and kept for that purpose; and he shall pay over to the Treasurer of the Association all money which may come into his hands at the close of the session of each General Board meeting, and on or before the expiration of every three months thereafter during the term of his office.

Fourth—That of the Corresponding Secretary: To enter all resolutions and proceedings of the Board in a book which shall be provided for that purpose; read the same when called for at any Board meeting; communicate with the press and distant members and officers of the Association; receive all post-office orders, communications, parcels, papers or periodicals for, and on account of, the General Board.

Fifth—That of the Treasurer: To receive from the Financial Secretary and faithfully keep—subject to the order of the President of the Board, countersigned by the Financial Secretary of said Board—all moneys and credits belonging, or in anywise pertaining, to this General Board.

These Executive officers shall hold their office for the space of two years, and until their successors shall be elected and qualified.

POWERS OF THE GENERAL BOARD.

The delegates, when assembled in General Convention, shall have Legislative and Judicial powers in the following cases, to-wit:

Legislative.—For the equal assessment of all the members of the Association, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of said Board, and for all other necessary purposes; for the organization of new Districts, or for the reorganization of old ones; the enactment of all Laws necessary for the General Government of the Association, together with the power to enforce the strict observance of such laws. Second,

Judicial.—For the hearing and determining of all grievances or complaints which may come up on appeal taken from the decision of any District Board, whether such appeal be taken by individual members or Lodges; provided, that

in all cases the appellants shall have deposited, or cause to be deposited, with the Financial Secretary of the General Board the sum of ten dollars (\$10), which sum of money, in case the decision of the Board below be reversed, shall be refunded to the appellant; otherwise it shall remain in the Treasury of the General Board.

GOVERNMENT AND POWERS OF THE GENERAL BOARD.

The Districts and Lodges shall be officered and governed in the same manner and by the same grade of officers as those which govern the General Board. They may also make such by-laws for said government as may be deemed necessary by their respective bodies; provided, such by-laws are in harmony with the Constitution of the Association.

The District Board shall be composed of one Delegate from each Lodge, in addition to the proper officers of said Board, with the exception of the Treasurer, and shall have Legislative and Judicial power in the following cases: First,

Legislative.—On all questions which may be brought before them in a legitimate manner, from the various Lodges composing said District, in relation to weights and measures, restriction of labor, strikes, &c., and shall have power to make assessments upon their respective Lodges, in the proportion of the members contained therein, for the purpose of defraying the necessary expenses of said Board, and the assistance or support of any of its members, wherever the Board shall authorize such support or assistance to be given.

The Lodges shall be composed of any number of members who may organize themselves under the Constitution of the Association, and they shall have power to regulate all their own local affairs; provided, that in so doing they do not conflict with the affairs or interests of any other Lodge in the District; and in case of any confliction of interests occurring as above, the case shall be referred to the respective District Boards for adjudication.

GENERAL LAWS.

SECTION 1. This Society shall be called the "AMERICAN MINERS' ASSOCIATION," and shall consist exclusively of practical Miners.

SEC. 2. The affairs of each Lodge shall be conducted by a President, Cash Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Door-keeper, Treasurer, Financial Committee, and a General Committee.

SEC. 3. The Financial Committee shall be composed of six members, and the President, who shall preside at all their meetings.

SEC. 4. The General Committee shall have power to call meetings of their respective Lodges, to inflict fines on officers and members for non-attendance, &c., and to do such other business as may be required of them by their respective Lodges.

SEC. 5. The initiation fee shall not be less than one dollar per member, and the contribution twenty-cents per member per calendar month.

SEC. 6. Any member who shall neglect to pay his arrears for more than two months, shall be suspended from all benefits until such arrears are paid up; and, if he neglect to pay up at the expiration of three months, he shall be expelled.

SEC. 7. All moneys shall be paid by the Treasurer, on account of each Lodge.

SEC. 8. Each Lodge shall meet once in a week, said meeting to be held on such night as may, by a majority, be

deemed proper. (This law may be modified to suit circumstances, by and with the consent of the various District Boards.)

SEC. 9. Any member who shall break a General Law or By-Law to which there is no penalty attached, shall be tried by a Committee, which Committee shall have the power to inflict such fine as it may deem proper, under all the circumstances.

SEC. 10. The Miners of each Drift, Shaft or Slope shall have the power to manage their own local affairs; providing they manage them in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and Laws of this Association,

SEC. 11. If any member of this Association shall be discharged by his employer for being a member, or for taking an active or prominent part in said Association, the Miners who may be working for the same operator or employer shall cease to work until such member or members shall be allowed to resume their work.

SECTION 12. All Lodges in this Association are required to report, once in three months, their condition, as to increase or decrease of members, &c., through the *Miner*.

SEC. 13. All District meetings to be called also through the *Miner*; and that the objects of such meeting should be published along with such call, together with the time and place of holding such meetings, except in cases hereinafter provided for by special resolution.

SEC. 14. All petitions to the General Board must be presented on the first day of each session of the General Board, or they shall not be acted upon during that session.

SEC. 15. The Financial Secretary of each Lodge shall make out and sign all Clearance Cards, and the President of each Lodge shall countersign the same.

SEC. 16. Any Lodge which shall refuse to receive or accept a Clearance Card from a member of any other Lodge, being in good standing, shall forfeit and pay to the General Board, for each offense, the sum of \$20.

SEC. 17. The President is authorized and empowered to admit new Lodges to the Association, and to assign them their number and District, during the interval between the sessions of the General Board.

SEC. 18. All Lodges admitted, either by the President or by the General Board, to this Association, which may not be represented by delegate, shall be required to pay the last levy imposed by the General Board, for the expense account of said Board, as well as all the levies for the Press, before they shall be entitled to full benefits from the Association.

SEC. 19. Any Lodge which shall neglect or refuse to pay the levies or assessments laid by the General Board, for the space of more than two months after the same shall have become due, shall be suspended from all the privileges of the Association until payment shall have been made of such levies or assessments; nor shall any member, bringing a clearance card from any such Lodge, be received into any other Lodge during the term of such suspension; and it is hereby made the duty of the Financial Secretary to report any such dereliction of duty on the part of any Lodge or Lodges, as soon as they occur, to the editor of the *Weekly Miner*, in order that the same may be published in the first regular issue of the above paper after the reception of such report. And upon the payment of such arrears to the Financial Secretary, he shall immediately cause the same to be published in the columns of the *MINER*: and this shall be considered legal notice of the fact that any Lodge so paying is again reinstated in its former fellowship with the Association.

SEC. 20. Any member of the Association who may quit coal digging to work temporarily at any other business, shall, upon his return to coal digging again, be charged only with his arrears of contribution; but, if he shall have been digging coal at any other place, he shall be required to pay, in addition to his arrears of contribution, all arrears of levies, assessments or fines which may have accrued before the presentation of his card.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolved, That the editor of the MINER shall cause a financial report to be published—once in three months—in circular form, exhibiting all the debits and credits of the said office, and showing the balances, if any remain; and one copy of said Circular Financial Report shall be sent to the Corresponding Secretary of each Lodge in the Association, as soon as the same shall be issued.

Resolved, That, in case it becomes necessary to call any district meeting, in such haste as to prevent the publication of the call in the MINER, if the meeting is called in any other sufficient manner, the call for such meeting shall not be deemed illegal, on account of such non-publication.

Resolved, That whenever any Lodge or District of the American Miners' Association desire copies of the Constitution and Laws, or Cards, or other printed matter for their use, they shall send for the same to the MINER office, and that they shall be charged for the same at the lowest paying rates—postage added.

Resolved, That all correspondence from and between any Lodges in the American Miners' Association, from and after the first of November, 1864, which have not been impressed with the seal of the Lodge from which it emanates, shall be considered unofficial, null and void; but the Corresponding Secretary of each Lodge shall have the privilege of impressing a sufficient number of blank sheets of paper, with the

seal of the Lodge, and shall keep the same in his possession for use during the legal term of his official career.

Resolved, That any operator shall be eligible to office in the Association, provided he be a legal member of the Association, in the sense of that paragraph in the Constitution which reads as follows: "Any member of the Lodge, who is in good standing with his Lodge, shall be eligible to election for any office in the Association;" and also the following section in the laws: "That this Society shall be called the American Miners' Association, and shall consist exclusively of practical miners."

Resolved, That the Constitution and Laws be printed in the English, German and Welch languages.

Resolved, That we adopt some means to obtain a uniform rule in relation to the rate of wages paid for mining coal throughout the mines operated by members of this Association.

(Referred to the various District Boards for their action.)

Resolved, That the whole question in reference to the turns of boys, who may work in the mines, be referred for legislation to each respective District, with the recommendation from this Convention that they be urged to take such action in reference to the matter as will tend to discourage the employment in the mines of boys below the age of twelve years.

Resolved, That the Clearance Cards at present in use in all the new States, that have this week joined the Association, shall be received as valid by all Lodges in the Association until the first day of November, 1864.

Resolved, That this Convention recommend to each mining State, now embraced in the American Miners' Association,

that they should each take the necessary steps—at an early day—to meet in Branch or State Conventions, and perfect their respective organizations, by electing State General Boards, and doing such other legislative acts as may be embraced within the purview of our Constitution and Laws.

Resolved, That this Convention give a vote of thanks to our friend and brother, Mr. William Murdy, of Orangeville, Pennsylvania, for his unwavering devotion to the interests of the American Miners' Association.

Resolved, That the next National Convention be held at Cleveland, Ohio, on the first Wednesday in September, 1865, and that an assessment be laid upon each member in the Association of fifty cents, to defray the expenses of that Convention.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention, and the Association, are hereby given to John Hinchcliffe, editor of the MINER, for his valuable services and persistent efforts in behalf of the Association.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be awarded by acclamation to Mr. B. M. Hetherington for his services in behalf of the Association, both as Clerk in the office and as Special Agent to obtain subscriptions to the MINER.

BY-LAWS.

- I. Any member having any remarks to make must rise to his feet and address the Chair.
- II. Any member talking or leaving the room while another has the floor will be considered out of order.
- III. No member shall leave the room without leave of the President.
- IV. Any member refusing to keep order, when called upon to do so, shall be tried by the General Committee, and dealt with as they may deem proper.
- V. The Laws shall be read at least once a month to the Lodge while in session.
- VI. No person shall become a member of this Association unless he be proposed by a member, in good standing, and a majority of the members present vote for his admission.

RULES OF ORDER.

- I. The Association shall be called to order by the President.
- II. The Secretary shall then read the minutes of the last regular meeting, and of all special meetings that may have been subsequently held.
- III. Roll of officers called.
- IV. Reports of Special Committees shall then be received and acted on.
- V. Propositions for membership shall be in order.
- VI. Old or unfinished business shall then be in order.
- VII. New or miscellaneous business shall then be in order.
- VIII. To adjourn.



